

The Sacrament of Reconciliation



Reconciliation (also known as confession or Penance) is a sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ in his love and mercy to offer sinners forgiveness for offenses committed against God. At the same time, sinners reconcile with the Church, because it is also wounded by our sins.

Rite of Reconciliation

Priest gives a blessing or greeting.

Make the Sign of the Cross and say, "*Bless me, father, for I have sinned. My last confession was [give weeks, months, or years].*"

Confess all of your sins to the priest. (If you are unsure or uneasy, tell him and ask for help.) Say, "*I am sorry for these and all of my sins.*" The priest assigns a penance and offers advice to

help you be a better Catholic.

Say an Act of Contrition, expressing your sorrow for your sins. The priest, acting in the person of Christ, then absolves you from your sins.

Act of Contrition *O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you, and I detest all my sins because of your just punishments; but most of all because they offend you, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of your grace to sin no more and avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen.*

The Lord is kind and merciful!

Every time we sin, we hurt ourselves, other people, and God. In Reconciliation, we acknowledge our sins before God and his Church. We express our sorrow in a meaningful way, receive the forgiveness of Christ and his

Church, make reparation for what we have done, and resolve to do better in the future.

To make a good confession we review our lives since our last confession, searching our thoughts, words, and actions for that which did not conform to God's command to love him and one another through his laws and the laws of his Church. This is called an examination of conscience. To make an examination of conscience:

Examination of Conscience Recall your sins. Prayerfully ask yourself what you have done with full knowledge and full consent against God's and the Church's commandments.

- Do **I** cling to my will, my desires, my ways? Have **I** thanked God for his gifts to me?
- Have **I** reverence for the name of Jesus? Am **I** ashamed to witness to my faith in God to others?
- Did **I** take the name of God in vain? Did **I** curse or take a false oath?
- Did **I** miss Mass on Sundays or holy days of obligation through my own fault? Am **I** attentive at Mass? Did **I** keep fast and abstinence on the prescribed days?
- Did **I** hate or quarrel with anyone, or desire revenge? Did **I** refuse to forgive? Was **I** disrespectful?
- Did **I** get drunk? Did **I** take illicit drugs?
- Did **I** consent to, recommend, advise, or actively take part in an abortion?
- Was **I** unfaithful to my spouse? Did **I** engage in sexual activity outside of marriage?
- Did **I** steal or damage another's property? Have **I** been honest and just in my business relations?
- Have **I** been responsive to the needs of the poor and respected the dignity of others? Did **I** tell lies? Did **I** judge others rashly in serious matters?
- Have **I** envied other people?
- Am **I** able to forgive myself? Do **I** seek to be humble and to bring peace?